

September 9, 1999 DRAFT (REV 1)

### Title V Permit Review Guidelines EPA Region 9 September 9, 1999

#### **INTRODUCTION**

As the implementation of the Title V Operating Permits Program progresses, Region IX is receiving more and more permits for our review. We recognize that each permit we receive is the product of a great deal of effort by the permitting authority and source, and this effort is reflected in the quality of the permits we receive. In our role as permit reviewer, we are required to make certain that the permit fully meets the requirements of Part 70 and assures compliance with all applicable requirements. As the number of permits being reviewed increases, we feel it is increasingly important to ensure the reviews of permits provided by EPA Region IX permit engineers are consistent both in content and process. Thus, we have developed these "Title V Permit Review Guidelines" to provide a roadmap for both new and experienced Region IX permit reviewers to follow. In addition, we are sharing this document with permit writers from state and local agencies so they can benefit from knowing EPA's review process up-front and understand how to avoid common problems. However, this document is not binding upon state or local agencies.

The content of this document includes both the step-by-step procedures to be followed by Region IX staff in reviewing a permit, as well as substantive permit review tips and background information on identifying and correcting problems (see "How To Use These Guidelines" below). While the document contains for the first time the process that EPA Region IX uses to review Title V permits, it *creates no new policy* on the substantive review of permits. This document sets forth the guidelines which the Region's permit reviewers use. These guidelines are based on the Title V regulations and policy memoranda issued by EPA Headquarters. Consultation between permit reviewers and other staff and management is standardized to ensure that these guidelines are applied consistently.

Note that the procedures and guidelines identified and described in this document are intended solely for the guidance of Region IX personnel and do not represent final agency action. They are not intended and cannot be relied upon to create rights, substantive or procedural, enforceable by any party in litigation with the United States or the Environmental Protection Agency. Region IX reserves the right to act at variance with these measures and to change them at any time without public notice. Finally, nothing in these guidelines is intended to limit Region IX's authority and ability to object to Title V permits that Region IX determines to be inadequate or otherwise not in compliance with part 70.

As Title V regulations or implementation policies evolve, we plan to prepare updates of either certain sections of these guidelines or the entire document. We will make every effort to distribute such updates as appropriate. For those outside of Region IX, contact the Region IX

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Permits Office with questions regarding the availability of updates. We hope today's guidance and any updates will fulfill its intended purpose of promoting consistency in permit review by Region IX.

### **HOW TO USE THESE GUIDELINES**

This document is organized as a set of 4 nested pieces, each described below. New permit reviewers should use all four sections when reviewing a permit. More experienced permit reviewers should be able to rely upon the "Checklist of Topics" to guide the permit review, referring back to the more detailed "Guidelines" section and appendices only for new or complicated issues.

### **Level I: Step-by-Step Process**

- Describes what the permit engineer should do during each of the 6 weeks of the 45-day review period
- Sends the reviewer to the **Checklist** and **Guidelines** to undertake the substantive review of the permit
- Includes
  - *How do I write a comment letter?*
  - When to object to a permit
  - Process for objecting to a permit
  - *How are issues resolved after an objection?*

### **Level II: Checklist**

- Provides a list of what permits should contain and what they may contain, along with short descriptors of each item
- Allows the permit reviewer to determine which **Guidelines** to use

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#### **Level III: Guidelines**

- Includes the following subjects:
  - Applicable requirements
    - SIP
    - NSPS, NESHAP, and MACT
    - NSR/PSD
    - Acid Rain Requirements
    - Other applicable requirements
  - Standard Permit Conditions
  - Practical Enforceability
  - Permit Shield
  - Streamlining
  - Periodic Monitoring
  - Schedules of Compliance
  - Alternative Operating Scenarios and Emissions Trading Provisions
  - Cross Referencing and Level of Detail
  - Origin and Authority Citation
  - Insignificant Activities
- For each subject, contains guidance such as:
  - What is it? and Why review it?
  - What to look for with examples
  - Description of problems and How to correct problems

### **Level IV: Appendices**

• Contains EPA policy memoranda and other material referred to in the **Guidelines** 

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## EPA Region 9 Title V Permit Review Guidelines

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May 20, 1999 Letter from EPA to STAPPA/ALAPCO

# Level I Step-by-Step Process for Permit Review

September 9, 1999

### How Do I Review a Title V Permit?

Reviewing a Title V permit is a step-by-step process. Here is a summary of the process, along with a time line to help you stay on track during the review period. A more complete explanation of each step appears on the following pages.

Day 1	Administrative Tasks	Date stamp and make copies as needed. Notify permitting authority that we received permit if requested.
Week 1	Completeness Review	Make sure you have everything you need to begin your review.
Weeks 1 and 2	Begin Permit Review	Become familiar with the permit, the statement of basis, public comments, and other pertinent material. Using the Checklist and Guidelines in this document, identify problem areas.
Weeks 3 and 4	Follow up on Problems	Consult with permitting authority and with other EPA staff and management. Try to resolve problems. Determine how serious remaining problems are. Prepare comment letter.
Weeks 5 and 6	Finish Review	Talk with permitting authority about our concerns. If we are objecting to the permit, make sure that you have contacted HQ and that EPA management has contacted the permitting authority.
After Review	Follow up on Comments	Check to see whether our comments were addressed.

You have 45 days to review the permit. In order to finish your review on time, the guidance that follows suggests *time frames* for completing each of the steps listed above. If you begin to fall behind this schedule, make sure that you leave enough time to consult with your supervisor and other staff about your conclusions, and to talk with the permitting authority about our final determination.

### Day 1 – Administrative Tasks

Date stamp the permit.

Check to see whether the permitting authority asked that we notify them when we receive the proposed permit. If they did, send a letter to the permitting authority saying that we have received the proposed permit for this facility. For California districts, see procedure in CAPCOA Title V Attachment in Appendix B.

For permits not submitted through the Electronic Permit Transmittal System (EPSS), compose a Permit Transmittal Screen in EPSS. The instructions are posted in the Permits Office database (category: Databases; title: How to Put a Permit into EPSS).

Make a copy to use as your working copy. File the original in the official file. Keep all original documents in the official file.

### Week 1 – Completeness Review

Check to see that you have	Permit Permit application Statement of basis (or technical support document or engineering analysis) that contains all supporting documentation*
If any documents are missing	Ask permitting authority for documents.  The 45-day clock begins when we receive the proposed permit and all necessary supporting information.
Once you have all the documents	For CA districts following the process set out in the CAPCOA Title V Attachment (see Appendix B), the 45-day clock may not be stopped by either EPA or the permitting authority, except when EPA either objects to the permit or approves it in writing.
Check to see whether the permitting authority followed its procedures for public and affected State notice and an opportunity for hearing.	If it appears that the permitting a uthority did not follow its procedures, call and discuss the issue with the permit engineer. Failure to follow these procedures can be grounds for objection. See <i>When to Object to a Permit</i> below.
Other material you'll need	Material in program binder: State or local part 70 rule Propos ed and final FR notices approving rule Other references: 40 CFR parts 60, 61, and 63 SIP binder for permitting authority State or local rule book Earlier comments on this or other permits from permitting authority Our files on the source (SSTS, permit files)

<sup>\*</sup> For a list of what the statement of basis should contain, see the CAPCOA Title V Attachment in Appendix B. Only information **not** contained in the permit application or permit need be included in the statement of basis. For permit renewals, sources may reference, rather than resubmit, materials already in our files.

## Weeks 1 and 2 - Begin Permit Review

What to do	What to look for
Read permit.	Using the <b>Checklist</b> in the next section of this document, note features of the permit that you will review in detail using the Guidelines.
Evaluate permit and statement of basis using <b>Guidelines</b> . Consult permit application as needed.	Note questions and problem areas. This step will consume most of the first two weeks of your review, or longer.
Read our notices approving the part 70 rule.	Make note of the interim approval issues so that you don't comment on them in your permit review.
Look at comments we made on earlier permits from this permitting authority.	Check to see whether these problems exist in the current permit.
Look at public comments. If public comment period and EPA review period run concurrently, ask permitting authority to send public comments as soon as they receive them.	Check to see whether permitting authority adequately addressed the issues raised.

## Weeks 3 and 4 - Follow up on Problems and Questions

Consult with other staff as needed.	Discuss problem areas. Determine which category each problem falls into:		
	1. An <b>objection issue</b> is a problem so serious that the permit should not be issued until it is corrected. See <i>When Do I Object to a Permit?</i> below.		
	<ol> <li>A comment is a change you think is needed to improve the permit but does not require an objection.</li> </ol>		
Call state or local permit engineer.	Ask questions. Discuss problem areas including objection issues. Develop a good understanding of the permitting authority's point of view. To the extent that you can, reach agreements on changes that the permitting authority will make. If you reach any agreements, ask the permitting authority to put them in writing. It is important to have the agreed-upon changes in writing so that you can use them later in the process to avoid an objection if you need to.		
Draft comment letter.	See How Do I Write a Comment Letter? below.		
If you have no comments	If the public comment period has expired and you're confident that you have reviewed the comments and any other information pertaining to the permit, send a "no comment" letter to the District. If public comments or other information may still be submitted, do not send the "no comment" letter until the 45-day period expires. When you do so, also write "no comment" on the cover letter of the permit, and file it with the application in the space saver. If you do not send your letter through EPSS, be sure to import it into EPSS and create a DocLink.		

### Weeks 5 and 6 - Finish Your Review

If possible, fax your draft comment letter or a list of issues to permitting authority.	See whether you can resolve any more issues. If you do, ask the permitting authority to put the agreements in writing.
Finalize your comment letter.	Incorporating any agreements you reached with the permitting authority, finish drafting the letter. Have your supervisor and/or an Associate Director review it. The manager most familiar with the issues should sign the letter.
Send final letter to permitting authority.	After the letter is signed, either the manager or you should call the permitting authority to let them know the letter is coming.
If you have objection issues, follow the <i>Process for Objecting to a Permit</i> below.	Make sure you communicate well internally and with the permitting authority. By the time we object to a permit, there should have been enough conversations internally and with the permitting authority so that no one is surprised on Day 45.
Complete final administrative tasks.	Import comment letter into EPSS and create a DocLink. Note electronic file name at bottom of concurrence page. Staple concurrence copy to official file copy. (Do not put concurrence page in EPSS.) Place official file copy in permit file. File application, permit, and comments together in space saver.

## After the 45-Day Review Period

If you objected to the permit	See How Are Issues Resolved After an Objection? below.
If you did not object but provided comments to the permitting authority	Check the final permit to see whether your comments were incorporated or whether the permitting authority considered them. If they were not incorporated and the permitting authority didn't explain why to your satisfaction, call the permit engineer to discuss the situation. Discuss the issue with your supervisor and/or an Associate Director if questions remain. If you do not receive the final permit, remind the permitting authority of its obligation to send it to us.
If you find that the permitting authority made changes to the final permit beyond the scope of your comments	Evaluate the significance of the changes. If any of them should have undergone public notice and EPA review, e.g., deleting or changing an applicable requirement, call the permit engineer to discuss. Raise the issue to your supervisor and/or an Associate Director. S/he may decide to raise the issue with the permitting authority's management. We have authority to request that the permit be reopened, or to reopen it ourselves. See 70.7(g).
If we receive a public petition to object to the permit	Consult with OAQPS on the correct process for responding to the petition. An up dated memo describing the process is forthcoming.

### **How Do I Write a Comment Letter?**

- Explain the problem. Be specific. If appropriate, give examples of problems that could occur under the permit as drafted. Include the legal basis for your comment, including references to both part 70 and the state or district rule.
- State your understanding of the permitting authority's perspective on the issue.
- Note whether the problem is:
  - 1. an **objection issue** (in which case, follow the guidance below) OR
  - 2. a comment.
- Explain the correct approach. Suggest a new permit term that fixes the problem, or describe the analysis needed to develop the permit term. If there are different approaches for the permitting authority to consider, explain each option and its legal basis.
- Incorporate any agreements you have reached with the permitting authority. Be sure to include the specific language you agreed on for new permit terms, and reference the written commitment you received from the permitting authority as appropriate.
- Check with supervisor to find out when s/he wants to review the letter. If your supervisor tells you to work with an Associate Director, talk to him/her about reviewing the letter. You would then be working with the A.D. for the duration of the project.
- Copy facility on letter. For CA agencies, copy ARB.
- When you send the letter, import it into EPSS and create a DocLink. Also send a hard copy.

### When To Object to a Permit

- According to 70.8(c)(1), EPA will object to a permit if it is not in compliance with applicable requirements or requirements of part 70.
- According to 70.8(c)(3), other grounds for objecting include:
  - failure of the permitting authority to give EPA the information it needs to adequately review the permit;
  - failure to follow the public notice requirements of 70.7(h); and
  - failure to notify affected States and respond appropriately to their comments.
- How do I decide whether to recommend an objection? The **Guidelines** will help you identify problems. If you identify a problem through the Guidelines that you have not been able to resolve with the permitting authority, consider whether the problem falls in one of the categories above. If it does, then consult with senior staff members and your supervisor. Follow the **Process for Objecting to a Permit** that appears on the next page.

### **Process for Objecting to a Permit**

- Check with **other staff** and with **your supervisor** to make sure they agree with your judgment and that it is consistent with precedents. If you are uncertain about precedents, check with HQ and other Regional Offices.
- Notify **Office of Regional Counsel**. An attorney will need to be involved as you draft the letter, and it is sometimes helpful to have one involved in discussions with the permitting authority.
- If you haven't already done so, try to resolve the issues with the permitting authority. If you reach agreements, put them in writing.
- If you have tried and failed to resolve the issues, let **your supervisor and/or an Associate Director** know. Participate with either of them in a call with the permitting authority's management to try to resolve the issues. If issues remain unresolved, let **Division Director** know.
- If you are still unable to resolve the issues, give **HQ** a heads-up and describe the issues in the next bi-weekly national conference call. See memo on Objection Communications Strategy in Appendix B. The offices that need to know are OGC, OECA, and OAQPS.
- In preparing the letter objecting to the permit, follow the guidance on comment letters above AND include standard language regarding an objection. See the example in Appendix B. It is essential that the letter contain our reason(s) for objecting to the permit and a description of the terms and conditions the permit must include to respond to the objection. Your supervisor and/or an Associate Director will want to review the letter closely. ORC will also need to review the letter, and you will need to e-mail it to the HQ offices listed above as soon as you have a good draft. Make sure you allow enough time for all of these steps.
- After the Division Director signs the letter, make sure s/he or an Associate Director calls the APCO or Deputy APCO, or their equivalent, at the permitting authority and that you call the staff person. Fax the letter if necessary to ensure it is received by Day 45.

### **How Are Issues Resolved After an Objection?**

- The permitting authority has 90 days to revise the proposed permit and submit it to us, or to give us information that justifies its position that the permit should be issued.
- Check to see whether the permitting authority you are working with has an agreement with EPA that deals with the period following an objection. For example, we and the San Joaquin Valley district have agreed to specific time frames for the district to respond to our objection and for EPA to review the district's response.
- In the absence of such an agreement, try to resolve the issues within 90 days after the objection. Specifically, if the permitting authority submits a revised permit (or other information) responding to the objection within 60 days of the objection, you need to review the revised permit (or other information) within 30 days. See CAPCOA Title V Attachment in Appendix B. If you receive the revised permit later than that, review it and respond to the permitting authority as soon as you can.
- If, within 90 days of the objection, the permitting authority does not revise and submit a proposed permit in response to our objection, which could include giving us information that adequately justifies issuing the permit as originally proposed, then EPA will issue the permit itself or deny the permit. Refer to part 71.

### The Following Information Appears in Appendix B:

- CAPCOA Title V Attachment
- Memo on Objection Communication Strategy
- Example objection letter

## Level II

Checklist

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### **Level II - CHECKLIST**

This section contains a checklist of topics to guide both new and experienced permit reviewers. For more information on any of the topics listed in this section, refer to the corresponding "Guidelines" on the topic in Level III. The list includes specific "Applicable Requirements" as well as requirements and optional elements from Part 70 or EPA-approved Part 70 programs. Note that the "How Do I Identify it?" column includes whether the permit feature described must be in every permit, or if the permit feature is optional and must be checked only if it is present in the permit being reviewed.

Level II - Checklist

Topic	What is it?	How Do I Identify It?
Applicable Requirements		Check every permit to make sure it includes and assures compliance with all applicable requirements.
• SIP	SIP Rules are rules contained in the State Implementation Plan that were submitted by a permitting authority and approved by EPA as required under the Clean Air Act.	SIP rules may apply to specific sources, source categories, or more generally on a pollutant-by-pollutant basis. The facility and permitting authority should make determinations on which, if any, SIP rules apply, and include these rules with the proper citation in the permit.
• NSPS	NSPS stands for New Source Performance Standards. These standards are found in 40 CFR Part 60.	Affected facility and permitting authority should make initial determinations on whether NSPS requirements apply.  Determinations are based on type of emissions unit, size of unit (e.g., heat input), and date of construction or modification (reconstruction). If subject, make sure details are adequately included.
• NESHAP	The standards for sources emitting hazardous air pollutants are called the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollution (NE SHAP). Those standards promulgated before the 1990 CAA amendments are found at 40 CFR Part 61.  The 1990 CAA amendments identified 188 hazardous air pollutants and created a requirement to control the emissions of these HAPs through the "Maximum Achievable Control Technology" standards. The post-1990 NESHAPs (also known as MACT standards) are specific to various source categories and are listed in 40 CFR Part 63.	Like the NSPS requirements above, sources are required to determine whether the specific standards apply. Check the permit application (and other supporting documents) to see if the source has made any such determination. Also, check the list (table of contents) in 40 CFR Part 61 and Part 63 to see if the source whose permit you are reviewing contains any subject emission units. If subject, make sure details are adequately included (see level III).

Level II - Checklist

Topic	What is it?	How Do I Identify It?
Applicable Requirements (continued) • NSR/PSD	Federally en forceable conditions in the Title V permit that originate from past (or concurrent, if a merged Title V/NSR program) SIP-approved permits.	Look for references to past permit conditions or NSR rules (in the citations of origin and authority). Check that the permitting authority is including past ATCs or current permits to operate as part of their complete proposed permit package submittal.
Acid Rain	The Acid Rain Program under Title IV of the Clean Air Act regulates certain new and existing utilities and other facilities which combust fossil fuel and generate electricity. Affected sources are required to get an Acid Rain Permit that can include SO2 and NOx emission limitations and/or monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements.	Title V permits for all sources subject to Acid Rain must include the Acid Rain Permit as part of the Title V permit. The Acid Rain Permit must contain the following sections:  Statement of Basis,  SO2 allowances and NOx requirements for affected units,  Comments, notes, and justifications,  Permit application (may be incorporated by reference).
Other Applicable Requirements	The Part 70 definition of "applicable requirements" includes several other standards which must be addressed when reviewing a Title V permit.  These requirements originate from specific federal requirements (e.g., stratospheric ozone depleting substances). If any of these requirements are applicable to a source, they must be included in the Title V permit. Specific boilerplate language is in Section III.	Boilerplate language is often included in the "General Conditions" section of the permit. Standards which require permit conditions for only a few source categories are often listed in the "Special Conditions" section of the permit.

**Level II - Checklist** 

Topic	What is it?	How Do I Identify It?
Standard Permit Conditions	Standard permit conditions are required under part 70 and the approved Part 70 program to be placed in every Title V permit.	These conditions are generally grouped together in the permit under the heading "standard conditions" or "general requirements."  Check the first few permits from every agency to make sure that all of the standard conditions are correctly included; thereafter, make sure that the same language is carried over into each permit.
Practically Enforceable Language	Practically enforceable permit language establishes a clear legal obligation for the source and allows compliance to be verified.	Practically enforceable language does not:      create ambiguous interpretations of requirements     circumvent required public and EPA review     prevent or limit enforcement of permit conditions     excuse violations, or     limit the types of information that can be used to determine compliance.  Check every permit carefully to make sure the language is practically enforceable.

Level II - Checklist

Topic	What is it?	How Do I Identify It?
Permit Shield	A permit shield is specific permit language that can protect a source from enforcement of an applicable requirement.	Permit shields are usually labeled, but can otherwise be identified by language such as:  • "Requirement [A] has been determined not to apply to this facility", OR  • "Compliance with the permit shall be considered compliance with Applicable Requirement [B]." Permit shields may be found under general provisions, but are more likely to be contained under permit- or unit-specific parts of the permit.  Permit shields are optional but should be reviewed carefully if present.
Streamlining	Streamlining is the process of evaluating multiple overlapping requirements on an emission unit to come up with one set of requirements to be placed in the title V permit that will assure compliance with all the overlapping requirements.	Look in the statement of basis accompanying the permit for an explanation of any streamlining done in the permit. In addition to this streamlining demonstration, a streamlined permit term should include multiple citations to all subsumed requirements.  Streamlining is optional but should be reviewed carefully if present.

Level II - Checklist

Topic	What is it?	How Do I Identify It?
Periodic Monitoring	Periodic Monitoring describes the combination of monitoring required by the applicable requirements and monitoring created in the Title V permit as necessary to meet the CAA requirement that the permit assure compliance with the applicable requirements.	Periodic monitoring must be addressed for each applicable requirement in a Title V permit. Monitoring includes activities such as:
Schedules of Compliance	A schedule of compliance details an enforceable sequence of actions that will return a noncomplying source to compliance.	A schedule of compliance will usually appear as a sequence of actions with milestones leading to compliance with specific applicable requirements.  Schedules of compliance are required in the permit only if the source is out of compliance with an applicable requirement. Use information in the application and other available information to determine if schedule must be included; Also, review if present.

Level II - Checklist

Topic	What is it?	How Do I Identify It?
Alternative Operating Scenarios and Emissions Trading Provisions	The Title V permitting program allows the Title V permits to contain terms and conditions for "reasonably anticipated" operating scenarios. A source	Alternative Operating Scenarios should be identified in the permit as such. Look for subsections and headings in the permit that identify the Alternative Scenario.
	with an approved alternative operating scenario(s) may, as part of normal operations, make changes in operations in a way that triggers a different set of applicable requirements.	Emission trading provisions may be difficult to identify. Look for specific language in the permit that discusses the source's ability to trade emission increases with past
	A Title V permit may include provisions that allow permitted sources to establish a federally enforceable emissions cap that allows emission increases and decreases at the facility to be traded.	decreases. For SIP approved trading programs (RECLAIM) review the permit for provisions that allow such trades.  Alternative operating scenarios and emissions trading provisions are optional but should be reviewed if present.

Level II - Checklist

Topic	What is it?	How Do I Identify It?
Cross Referencing and Level of Detail	Cross-referencing refers to the practice of referencing an applicable requirement in a permit instead of including the full requirement.  The permit must describe the applicable requirement with sufficient level of detail to ensure each requirement is clear and unambiguous.	Be on the lookout for permit conditions that refer to specific regulations or documents such as:  SIP Rules  NSPS or NESHAP  operation and maintenance plans  test methods  permits numbers  monitoring protocols  The level of detail required depends on what the applicable requirement is and how the applicable requirement is included in the permit. In general, permits with more cross-referencing will have less detail in the permit.  Check every permit for an adequate level of detail. Cross referencing is optional and should be reviewed if present.
Origin and Authority Citation	The citation identifies the applicable requirement that is the origin of and authority for the inclusion of a permit condition.	A citation of origin and authority consists of a rule number and section or an SIP-approved permit number.  Check that each permit condition includes the appropriate citation.
Insignificant Activities	Part 70 programs may contain lists of activities designated as "insignificant" based on level of emissions and whether the activities are typically subject to unit-specific requirements.	Insignificant activities are defined within each permitting authority's part 70 program.  Review if a permit or permit application excludes units or activities from applicable requirements or part 70 requirements based on their status as insignificant activities.